

**Partnership Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2009**

Meeting Location: Baltimore, MD (APPL Conference)

Attending:

Mary Coulombe, HQ
Rachel Garren, HQ
Heather Burke, SAJ
Jeff Boutwell, SWF
Richard Otto, MVP

Phil Benge, NWW
Cori Brown, NAB
Chris Gallagher, SPN
Mike Hosey, SAW
Greg Miller, SAD

1. Team Member Information

- a) Rachel Garren has completed her temporary assignment in HQ and Heather Burke is now detailed to HQ for 120 days. Chris offered her thanks to Rachael and a warm welcome to Heather.
- b) Mark Wilmes has accepted a new position at Mark Twain Lake leaving the LRD position vacant. Chris Rapenchuk has been selected as the new LRD representative.
- c) Greg Miller attended as the liaison to the RLAT.

2. Association of Partners for Public Lands Conference

- a) The partnership training workshop conducted at the APPL conference has been very successful. There were 45 participants this year, the most ever. All presenters were Corps employees except for one (Emilyn Sheffield), signifying that partnerships are becoming more common place within the Corps culture. There was some discussion concerning whether or not this course should be made a Prospect course. Advantages and disadvantages were discussed but no recommendation made.
- b) Rachel mentioned that she had some feedback concerning a Corps meet and greet at the beginning of the conference. This has been done in the past and will be considered for future conferences.
- c) Chris and Heather will draft and send thank you letters to all the presenters at the Corps training. Heather will let Chris know who at HQ's will be signing the letters.

3. Mary Coulombe – Future Direction for the PAC

- a) Mary's intent is to try to get a global look at partnerships within the Corps so that she/we can determine where we should be in the future, but feels partnerships are and will be in the heart of Corps operations.
- b) Mary addressed Office of Counsel support for the PAC and stated we can proceed using Mark McMurry from Fort Worth District Office of Counsel. She emphasized that we need to complete a legal analysis of our current authorities prior to drafting any legislative language. The legal analysis would identify any shortfalls in authority that might be needed for advancing our partnering efforts.
- c) Greg summarized the importance of outgrants and the involvement of Real Estate in the partnership arena. In the future Corps Districts should be considering "cooperative management

agreements” in place of a lease to avoid the tenant/lessee type relationship. Mary agrees that we need to capitalize on the Real Estate partnership connection.

- d) Mary indicated that there is a strong need to better describe and communicate the impact of our partnerships on our organizations, programs and funding. She asked the PAC to work on developing information, both quantitative and qualitative, that would allow us to describe how partnerships are now and will be in the future very significant to the accomplishment of management of projects and quality visitor services. She would like to see a package put together in the next 6 months that can be used internally and externally to demonstrate the scope and depth of the impacts of partnerships. Cori & Chris volunteered to take the lead in this effort and stated that ERDC should be able to help. We will need more than what is currently available in OMBIL.

e) **4. Handshake Program Update**

- a) Mike reported that all agreements, work projects, and final summaries are complete for the FY07 Handshake recipients, all agreements are signed for the FY08 recipients, and that 2 agreements are signed for the FY09 recipients.
- b) Mary stated that she has received comments from the field asking for higher Handshake award amounts and that multi-year funding should be considered. While the initial thought was to keep the award amount low so that as many projects as possible can receive an award and that this would stimulate new partnerships. It was decided that Mike and Jeff would discuss and make a proposal for a 2 tiered program that may be implemented in FY2010 or FY2011. They will also discuss creating a way to focus on special programs such as military recreation, children and nature, formation of friends groups, environmental stewardship, and utilizing existing national MOU's.
- c) In the past \$125,000 has been available from Headquarters and Mary will look in to the possibility of increasing that amount.

5. Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (CNREF)

- a) The CNREF is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to the stewardship of the environmental, cultural, educational, and outdoor recreation resources of the Corps NRM program.
- b) During CY2008 CNREF took 16 applications from Corps projects for assistance in a partnering effort. Three were chosen.
 - o Kansas City/Tulsa Water Team. Will seek a partner to provide promotional giveaways as prizes for members of the public who take the Team's water safety quiz at various community events in the region.
 - o Caesar Creek Visitor Center Expansion proposal. Will seek a partner or partners to acquire sufficient funds to complete design and initiate construction of an expansion to the visitor center
 - o Barren River Lake, KY - Website Development. Will fund the final production and release of the Friends of Barren River Lake Website to enhance the Friends group's fundraising and growth potential.
- c) Debby Chenoweth from the Foundation will be making a presentation via a conference call at the workshop tomorrow (March 6, 2009).

6. Legislative Update

- a) As mentioned in paragraph 3 the PAC may proceed with completing a legal analysis of our existing partnership authorities using office of counsel support from Fort Worth District. Dick, Jeff and Phil will take the lead on this.
- b) The legal analysis would:
 - o Review existing partnership legal authorities and compare with Corps policy (Regulations) to determine inconsistencies.
 - o Identify weaknesses or shortcomings in Corps legal authority or policy.
 - o Recommend future actions that clarify Corps policy.
 - o Recommend future legal authority that would be desirable for true partnering.

7. RLAT – Upcoming Meetings & PAC Items for Greg Miller

- a) Mary will be speaking to the RLAT at the next meeting (March 10, 2009) and will give a general overview of where she sees Corps operations at the present time. She will emphasize the most recent MOU's signed and will encourage all to use the National MOU's that are in effect.
- b) Greg will summarize the partnership program and the efforts of the PAC.

8. ER/EP Changes

- a) Debra Stokes has provided some recommended changes to the partnership regulations to Cori. Carolyn Bauer and Dori Murphy are reviewing the volunteer regulation but are wondering if this effort should wait until the legal analysis is complete. The team agreed that the legal analysis is very important and needs to be completed prior to updating ER's and EP's.

9. Update on Debra Stokes Vacant Position

- a) Mary stated that Debra's position announcement is near the bottom of the Headquarters recruitment list. Another detailer will be needed beyond Heather's 120 days, and probably another one beyond that. While Mary feels this position is critical, there is no solid schedule for hiring a replacement.

10. Next PAC Meeting

- a) The PAC meets formally twice per year and conducts monthly conference calls. The next conference call will be held on March 25th, 7am Pacific, 9am Central, and 10am Eastern Time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard J. Otto